

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

### TREE/SHRUB PRUNING

(Ac.)

CODE 660

#### DEFINITION

The removal of all or part of selected branches, leaders or roots from trees and shrubs.

#### PURPOSE

- Improve the appearance of trees or shrubs, e.g. ornamental plants and Christmas trees
- Improve the quality of wood products
- Improve the production of plant products, e.g. nuts, fruits, boughs and tips
- Reduce fire and/or safety hazards
- Improve the growth and vigor of understory plants
- Adjust the foliage and branching density or rooting length for other specific intents, such as wind and snow control, noise abatement, access control and visual screens and managing competition
- Improve health and vigor of woody plants e.g. disease, insect and injury management

#### CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on any area with trees or shrubs.

#### CRITERIA

##### **General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

The pruning and shearing method and timing will match the limitations of the site, soils and plants and minimize damage to the residual plant bole/stems and limbs. For a high degree of removal of crown foliage, pruning and

shearing shall be done in two or more timed intervals to minimize plant stress.

Debris and vegetative material left on the site after treatment will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose and other management activities.

Slash and debris shall be removed, treated or eliminated as approved. Refer to Slash Treatment (384).

Burning of removed vegetation shall follow the criteria and considerations listed in Prescribed Burning (338).

Ground vegetation and/or conditions must be left in a manner to address erosion and other natural resource concerns to acceptable levels.

Disinfect pruning and shearing tools to minimize the spread of pathogens.

Comply with Idaho Statute "Title 38: Forestry Forest Products and Stumpage Districts, Chapter 13, "Forest Practices Act" requirements. Consult with the local Idaho Department of Lands for permits and guidance.

#### CONSIDERATIONS

Pruning and shearing should be timed to minimize disturbance to seasonal wildlife activities.

Review the estimated cost and projected economic benefits of the project before starting a pruning or shearing project.

Branches removed may be used for other products.

## **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Periodically inspect plant condition and do additional pruning if needed.

## **REFERENCES**

Christmas Trees – A Management Guide.  
Univ. of Nebraska, EC 76-1741. 1976.

Shaping Pine Christmas Trees for Quality.  
UMC Forestry Guide No. 5706. 1972.

Pruning by Plowing. Missouri Conservationist.  
February 1990.

Pruning to enhance tree and stand value.  
Extension Circular 1457. Oregon State  
University Extension Service, Corvallis, OR.  
1995.

Pruning western white pine, a visual tool for  
species restoration. PNW 584. 2006.